

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 425
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PASS TO OES, NEA/INS (DENNIS KUX), NASA (RICHARD BARNES), USDOC

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TAGS: ETRD ETEL IN US
SUBJECT: INDIAN PROCUREMENT OF COMMUNICATION SATELLITES

REF: NEW DELHI A-02 (77), (B) NEW DELHI 16865 (76)

1. SUMMARY: IN LATE SEPTEMBER 1976, DR. SATISH DHAWAN, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (DOS) AND HEAD OF THE INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION (ISRO) INFORMED POTENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE BUILDERS OF THE GOI PLAN TO HAVE IN OPERATION OVER INDIA IN 1980 AN INDIAN NATIONAL SATELLITE SYSTEM (INSAT). BRIEF FUNCTIONAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR INSAT WERE PROVIDED AND THESE INCLUDED TWO DIRECT BROADCAST TV CHANNELS, 12 TELEPHONE TRANSPONDERS, TWO REMOTE SENSING DEVICES AND A COLLECTION RECEIVER-TRANSMITTER TO GATHER GROUND BASED METEOROLOGICAL DATA. BRIEFINGS OF POTENTIAL CONTRACTORS BY GOI TEAMS REPRESENTING CONCERNED MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS WERE HELD IN BANGALORE THE END OF NOVEMBER 1976 WITH FOUR US COMPANIES AND A FRENCH CONSORTIUM.

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THE PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE WAS PRESENTED DURING THE TECHNICAL BRIEFINGS WITH EACH COMPANY REPRESENTED. THE US COMPANIES WHO SPOKE TO THE EMBASSY AFTERWARDS FELT THE PROCUREMENT SCHEDULE WAS OPTIMISTIC, WERE CONCERNED ABOUT FINANCING, WONDERED WHETHER THE GOI REPRESENTATIVES WERE OF THE LEVEL TO COMMIT TO SUCH AN EXPENSIVE PROCUREMENT, AND WERE CONCERNED ABOUT HAVING AN INDIAN REPRESENTATIVE IN INDIA,

EMBASSY ASSURED THE US COMPANIES THAT GOI WAS REPRESENTED AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS, A REPRESENTATIVE WOULD NOT BE REQUIRED BUT MIGHT BE HELPFUL AND THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF GOI WAS EXCELLENT. ANY OF THE MATERIAL IN THIS CABLE OR IN THE REFERENCED AIRGRAM MAY BE RELEASED TO THE US COMPANIES INVOLVED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE DEPT. (REFAIR A WHICH FOLLOWS INCLUDES THE REFERENCES NOTED IN THE BODY OF THIS CABLE.)
END SUMMARY.

2. FOUR AMERICAN TEAMS ATTENDED THE GOI INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION (ISRO) BRIEFINGS ON THE INDIAN SATELLITE (INSAT) PROCUREMENTS. THEY WERE HUGHES, GE, FAIRCHILD, AND FORD AERONUTRONIC. A FRENCH CONSORTIUM, MATRA, WAS ALSO THERE. THE WEST GERMAN TEAM MBB ALSO PRESENTED A PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL BUT NOT IN PERSON. AS FAR AS EMBASSY KNOWS THERE WAS NO RUSSIAN TEAM PRESENT.

3. THE LETTER FROM ISRO CHAIRMAN DHAWAN TO THE SATELLITE SPACE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY WAS NEARLY IDENTICAL TO THE LETTER THAT DHAWAN SENT TO DR. JAMES FLETCHER, ADMINISTRATOR OF NASA. AS NOTED IN REFTEL B, THIS LETTER SPELLED OUT THE FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE SATELLITE FOR INSAT. A COPY OF ONE OF THESE LETTERS WILL BE FORWARDED WITH REAIR A.

4. TWO TEAMS, HUGHES AND FORD AERONUTRONIC, CAME TO THE EMBASSY AFTER THESE PRESENTATIONS AND WERE DEBRIEFED BY THE CHARGE, ECON COUNSELOR, COMMERCIAL ATTACHE AND SCICONS. A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS WERE RAISED BY THESE COMPANY REPRESENTATIVES CONCERNING THIS POTENTIAL PROCUREMENT.

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A. HOW SERIOUS WAS THIS PROPOSAL AND WAS IT SUPPORTED BY THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE GOI?
EMBASSY POINTED OUT THAT THE RECENT UPDATE IN THE FIFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN INDICATED SUPPORT BY THE GOI FOR ACTIVITIES NECESSARY FOR THIS PROCUREMENT (SEE REAIR A). FURTHERMORE, THE LETTER FROM DHAWAN (REAIR A) IN PARA 4 SAYS "WITH DUE AUTHORIZATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT". EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE PROCUREMENT IS REAL AND THAT A HIGH LEVEL CABINET COMMITTEE AND THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO IS THE MINISTER FOR SPACE, HAVE APPROVED THIS PROCUREMENT. FURTHERMORE, THE INDIAN TEAM THAT WAS ORGANIZED FOR PRESENTATION ON INSAT-1 INCLUDED THE HIGHEST RANKING CIVIL SERVANT, A SECRETARY, IN EACH OF THE MINISTRIES WHICH WILL BE INVOLVED WITH THE PLANNING, COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INSAT-1. THE PANEL OF SPECIALISTS CONSTITUTED FOR THE MEETING ARE HIGH LEVEL WORKING PEOPLE WHO WILL BE INVOLVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT. THE GOI WAS REPRESENTED BY SIX SECRETARIES OF THE CONCERNED MINISTRIES AND DEPART-

MENTS (SEE LIST OF ATTENDEES, REPAIR A). THE EMBASSY ALSO GAVE COPIES OF SOME PAGES OF THE OCTOBER 1976 UPDATE OF THE '74-'79 FIVE YEAR PLAN. THIS PLAN (INCLUDED WITH REPAIR A) SHOWS THAT THIRTY CRORES OF RUPEES (33 MILLION) HAS BEEN ALLOCATED BY THE GOI FOR THREE MINISTRIES SPECIFICALLY FOR INSAT. THE PLAN SHOWS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (DOS) BUDGET HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED AND IN ALL PROBABILITY MOST OF THE INCREASE IS FOR INSAT-1 SUPPORT.

B. EACH OF THE COMPANIES WAS CONCERNED WHETHER THEY SHOULD HAVE A LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE IN INDIA. THE ECONOMIC COUNSELOR ADVISED THAT IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO HAVE A LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE BUT ONE COULD BE HELPFUL. ISRO ITSELF INDICATED THEY WILL DEAL DIRECTLY WITH CONTRACTOR.

C. WHO WILL FINANCE THIS PROCUREMENT? WILL FINANCING BE PART OF THE PROPOSAL PACKAGE? AGAIN, ACCORDING TO ISRO FINANCING WILL NOT BE PART LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF THE PACKAGE AND THE GOI WILL SEEK FINANCING SEPARATE FROM PROPOSAL, E.G. EX-IM OR POSSIBLY LOCAL INDIAN BANKS. EMBASSY POINTED OUT THAT INDIA IS IN EXCELLENT HARD CURRENCY POSITION AND GAVE A COPY OF THE EMBASSY REPORT OF NOVEMBER 1976 "ECONOMIC TRENDS REPORT-INDIA" TO EACH OF THE DEBRIEFED US COMPANY GROUPS.

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D. IS THERE ANY UNFAIR COMPETITION IN THIS PROPOSAL, I.E. WILL THE FRENCH CONSORTIUM HAVE INSIDE TRACK BECOUSE THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO TIE GOVERNMENT FINANCING TO THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL? ACCORDING TO ISRO THIS IS A STRAIGHT TECHNICAL VENTURE THAT WILL BE JUDGED ON THE MERITS OF THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL AND ITS COSTS.

5. CONVERSATIONS WITH ISRO REPRESENTATIVES INDICATE THAT ISRO IS NOT ON ITS OWN IN THIS PROCUREMENT. ISRO HAS BEEN WORKING VERY CLOSELY WITH THE OTHER MINISTRIES TO DEVELOP THESE SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE SATELLITE. IT HAS THE FULLEST COOPERATION AND SUPPORT OF EACH OF THESE MINISTRIES. FOR EXAMPLE, ATTACHED TO REFIR A IS A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE FUNCTIONAL OPERATIONS OF THE SYSTEM INCLUDING THE EARTH STATION LOCATIONS AND THE SUPPORT MATRIX FOR TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN MAJOR INDIAN CITIES. THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY DEVELOPED IN CLOSE COORDINATION WITH THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPH DEPT. THE REMOTE SENSING SYSTEM AND THE USO OF THE SATELLITE TRANSPONDERS TO GET METEOROLOGY

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INFORMATION FROM LAND AND SEA BASED METEOROLOGY STATIONS AND SEND THEM TO A CENTRAL STATION WAS OBVIOUSLY COORDINATED WITH THE DEPT OF METEOROLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION.

6. THE CONTRACTORS WERE TOLD THAT THE GOI INTENDED TO SEND OUT AN RFP BY MARCH 1977 AND RECEIVE PROPOSALS FROM CONTRACTORS 90 DAYS AFTER SENDING OUT THE RFP. THE TWO CONTRACTORS THE EMBASSY SPOKE TO WERE SKEPTICAL THAT THIS SCHEDULE COULD BE MET. ISRO CLAIMS THEY CAN MEET THIS SCHEDULE OF HAVING THE RFP PREPARED SINCE THE RFP WILL BE A FUNCTIONAL AND NOT A DETAILED SPECIFICATION. FOR EXAMPLE THE RFP WILL PROBABLY NOT STATE THAT A SPIN STABILIZED SPACE CRAFT OR A BODY (3-AXIS) STABILIZED SPACE CRAFT WILL BE REQUIRED. IT WILL BE UP TO THE POTENTIAL CONTRACTOR TO DETERMINE THE BEST SYSTEM. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THE PROCUREMENT CYCLE INDICATED TO THE US COMPANIES BY ISRO IS THE FOLLOWING:

- A. RFP ISSUED MARCH 1, 1977.
- B. PROPOSALS SUBMITTED JUNE 1, 1977.
- C. PROPOSAL EVALUATION, CONTRACTOR CHOSEN, CONTRACTOR NEGOTIATIONS AUGUST 1, 1977 (ESTIMATED).
- D. INSAT DELIVERED 36 MONTHS (ESTIMATED) AFTER CONTRACT SIGNED - MID-1980.

E. INSAT-1 IN OPERATION - LATE 1980.

7. THE US COMPANIES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE EMBASSY FELT THAT ISRO WOULD HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME MEETING THE PROCUREMENT CYCLE SCHEDULE. THEY FELT ISRO MIGHT NEED ASSISTANCE WRITING THE RFP. BOTH COMPANIES SAID THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP IN THIS. THEY FELT A COST CONTRACT TO DO THIS WOULD BE BEST. THE LETTER TO THE POTENTIAL BIDDERS SAYS THAT " IT IS OUR INTENTION TO MAKE A SELECTION OF A FEW COMPANIES IN EARLY DECEMBER FOR FURTHER DETAILED DIALOGUE ON INSAT-1 SPACE SEGMENT PROCUREMENT WHICH WOULD ALSO ESTABLISH THE MODALITIES OF FURTHER CONCRETE INTER-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ACTION." SOME ISRO PERSONNEL BELIEVE ISRO CAN PREPARE THE RFP ON SCHEDULE ON ITS OWN. ISRO INDICATES THAT IF THEY NEEDED HELP THEY MIGHT HIRE A CONSULTANT FIRM RATHER THAN A POTENTIAL CONTRACTOR.

8. ANOTHER INDICATION OF GOI INTEREST TO GET AN INSAT IN OPERATION EXPEDITIOUSLY WAS A WIRE SERVICE (SAMACHAR) STORY OF DECEMBER 25, 1976, IN DELHI NEWSPAPERS. THE STORY STATED THAT INDIA AND THE SOVIET UNION HAVE AGREED ON THE FREQUENCY ALLOCATIONS REQUIRED BY INSAT-1. THE STORY NOTES THAT INDIA WAS REPRESENTED AT THE MOSCOW MEETINGS BY A TEAM OF INDIAN EXPERTS FROM THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND THE DOS. THE STORY POINTS OUT THAT SOVIET, INDONESIAN AND INTELSAT SATELLITES ARE OR WILL BE OVER THE INDIAN OCEAN AND OTHERS ARE EXPECTED. THE DHAWAN LETTER STATES THAT INDIA HAS NOTIFIED THE INTERNATIONAL FREQUENCY REGISTRATION BOARD (IFRB) OF ITS INTENTIONS AND THAT THE IFRB HAS PUBLISHED THIS INFORMATION IN ITS WEEKLY CIRCULAR (NO. 1187). INDIA HAS RESERVED A POSITION AND FREQUENCY BAND AND MUST NOW ACT ON THIS OR LOSE THE FREQUENCY ALLOCATION.

9. ISRO WANTS TO PROCURE THIS FIRST SATELLITE, INSAT-1. ISRO HAS INDICATED THAT IT WOULD LIKE TO BUILD THE NEXT GENERATION SATELLITE FOR A 1985 LAUNCH PERIOD. ISRO BELIEVES THAT SYSTEM TESTING AND INTEGRATION ARE THE MOST COSTLY PART OF A SATELLITE PROCUREMENT. ISRO IN THIS CASE WOULD BE THE SYSTEMS CONTRACTOR AND WOULD PROCURE FROM ABROAD MOST OF THE FLIGHT QUALIFIED SYSTEMS, E.G. GYRO SYSTEM, TRANSMITTERS, TRANSPONDERS, AND COMPONENTS. THEY WANT TO LAUNCH THIS SECOND GENERATION INSAT ON AN INDIAN ROCKET. IN KEEPING WITH THE ABOVE GOAL ISRO HAS INDICATED THAT THEY WANT TO ACT AS A PROGRAM MANAGER ON INSAT-1 IN THE SAME WAY THAT NASA HEADQUARTERS MANAGES FLIGHT PROGRAMS. ISRO WILL PARTICIPATE IN DESIGN REVIEWS, MAY SIT ON SELECTION COMMITTEES FOR CHOOSING SUBCONTRACTORS,

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AND WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE PERSONNEL AT THE CONTRACTOR'S FACILITY. ISRO WILL OPERATE INSAT-1 WITH THE PROCURED MASTER CONTROL FACILITY EARTH STATION IN INDIA AND MUST HAVE INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPACECRAFT AND ITS OPERATION TO DO THIS. ISRO NEEDS TO LEARN HOW TO MANAGE AN ENTERPRISE OF THIS MAGNITUDE IF IT IS TO BUILD ITS OWN INSAT. THE COMPANIES DID NOT ENVISAGE ANY PROBLEMS WITH ISRO PRESENCE IN THEIR FACILITIES. FURTHERMORE, THE US COMPANIES INDICATED THE POSSIBILITY OF ISRO BEING A SUB-CONTRACTOR IN PROVIDING SOME SYSTEMS OR COMPONENTS FOR THIS FIRST INSAT. THEY SEEMED WILLING TO DO THIS AS WELL. THIS WOULD GIVE ISRO VALUABLE EXPERIENCE IN LEARNING HOW TO DEAL WITH SUBCONTRACTORS FOR A FUTURE INSAT. THE EXPERIENCE ISRO WOULD GAIN IN THE ABOVE RELATIONSHIP WOULD HELP THEM TO BUILD INSAT, DO SYSTEMS TESTING, PROVIDE SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT, AND SELECT AND MANAGE SUBCONTRACTORS WHICH IS NECESSARY FOR AN ISRO BUILT NEXT GENERATION INSAT. THE US COMPANIES SEEMED WILLING TO PROVIDE SUBSYSTEMS AND BE SUBCONTRACTORS IN THIS CASE.

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PASS TO OES, NEA/ INS (DENNIS KUX), NASA (RICHARD BARNES), USDOC

10. ISRO WILL PROVIDE A SMALL BODY STABILIZED EXPERIMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE FOR LAUNCH ON THE FRENCH ARIANE ROCKET IN 1980. THIS WILL BE THE THIRD DEVELOPMENT FLIGHT OF THIS ROCKET. THE SATELLITE WILL BE STABILIZED BY MOMENTUM WHEELS AND WILL BROADCAST IN THE C-BAND, 4 AND 6 GHZ. THIS IS ANOTHER STEP TOWARD THE INDIAN GOAL OF HAVING ITS OWN COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE IN THE MID-80'S.

11. ISRO FELT THAT HUGHES AND GE HAD DONE THEIR HOMEWORK, WERE BEST PREPARED AND BEST REPRESENTED OF THE FIVE TEAMS PRESENT. THESE TWO TEAMS HAD MORE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE REPRESENTED THAN THE REST OF THE GROUPS.

12. SATISH DHAWAN, SECRETARY DEPT OF SPACE, IN HIS LETTER TO DR. JAMES FLETCHER, NASA ADMINISTRATOR, NOTED THAT A DELTA 2914/3914 CLASS LAUNCH VEHICLE WOULD BE REQUIRED FOR 1980 INSAT LAUNCH. THE SHUTTLE WILL BEGIN OPERATIONS ABOUT THIS TIME BUT ACCORDING TO THE US COMPANIES, WILL PROBABLY NOT BE READY FOR SATELLITE LAUNCHES IN 1980.

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13. EACH OF THE COMPANIES WAS ASKED TO PROVIDE PRELIMINARY COST ESTIMATES WHICH INCLUDED THE COST OF TWO FLIGHT MODELS, LAUNCH VEHICLE AND A MASTER CONTROL FACILITY ON THE GROUND TO CONTROL THE SATELLITE. ISRO AND US COMPANY ESTIMATES ARE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF \$150-250 MILLION.

14. THE COSTS OF THE INSAT-1 ARE ONLY THE TIP OF THE "ICEBERG". NINE TELEPHONE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EARTH STATIONS MUST BE BUILT (SEE REF A). THESE MUST HAVE TRANSMITTERS, RECEIVERS, AND THE SOPHISTICATED TELECOMMUNICATION AND TELEPHONIC EQUIPMENT TO TIE THE GROUND TELEPHONE SYSTEM TOGETHER. MUCH OF THE EQUIPMENT FOR THESE NINE STATIONS MUST BE PROCURED FROM ABROAD. THE RELIABILITY AND RESULTANT REDUNDANCY REQUIRED WILL MAKE THESE COSTLY FACILITIES. IN ORDER TO MAKE AN ALL-INDIA TV NETWORK POSSIBLE, NEW TV SATELLITE GROUND STATIONS WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE BUILT AND THE EXISTING TWO STATIONS CHANGED TO S AND C BAND. INDIA PROPOSES TO PROVIDE TELEVISION SETS TO MORE THAN A HALF A MILLION VILLAGES FOR DIRECT RECEPTION FROM THE SATELLITE. THE TV SETS, THE HIGH GAIN PARABOLIC ANTENNAS AND THE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE TEAMS WILL REQUIRE HEAVY INVESTMENTS IN BOTH CAPITAL AND MANPOWER. THE COSTS INVOLVED IN JUST PROVIDING ELECTRICITY EITHER BY SOLAR CELLS, WINDMILL, OR POWER LINES WILL BE ASTRONOMICAL BY INDIAN STANDARDS. THE ISRO EXPERIENCE WITH SITE DEMONSTRATES THIS. THE IMPORT OF COMPONENTS REQUIRED FOR EVERYTHING

BUT THE SATELLITE SYSTEM MIGHT EXCEED THE COST OF THE SATELLITE SYSTEM.

15. COMMENTS: INDIA IS EMBARKING ON AN AMBITIOUS AND EXPENSIVE PROGRAM. THE EXPERIENCE GAINED WITH THE ATS-6 SITE PROGRAM INDICATED THE VALUE OF DIRECT BROADCAST TELEVISION FOR EDUCATION, FARMING, NUTRITION, HEALTH, FAMILY PLANNING, NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND EVEN ENTERTAINMENT. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MENT FOR A SMALL FRACTION (2400) OF INDIA'S MORE THAN 500,000 VILLAGES. THE PROPOSED INSAT-1 WILL PROVIDE TV FOR VILLAGES, A NATIONAL TV NETWORK, AND REMOTE SENSING FOR WEATHER AND WATER RUNOFF FROM SNOW PREDICTIONS AS WELL AS A WEATHER STATION LINKUP. PREPARING THE FUNCTIONAL SPECIFICATION FOR A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP), MEETING THE SCHEDULE REQUIRED FOR A 1980 LAUNCH, AND GETTING THE GOI TO MAKE TIMELY PROCUREMENT DECISIONS WILL BE DIFFICULT. ALL OF THE INVOLVED GOI MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS HAVE BEEN WORKING TOGETHER TO GET THIS FAR AND MUST CONTINUE TO COOPERATE IN ORDER TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL PROCUREMENT. IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO MANAGE ONE OF THE LARGEST TECHNICAL PROCUREMENTS EVER FOR INDIA, ESPECIALLY WITH ALL OF THE DIFFERENT GOI GROUPS INVOLVED. THIS WILL BE EASY COMPARED TO ALL OF THE PREPARATIONS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO MAKE OPTIMAL USE OF INSAT-1 BY 1980. THE LATE DR. VIKRAM SARABHAI, HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE AND ATOMIC ENERGY, SAID: "INDIA WOULD NEVER CATCH UP WITH THE WEST BY TAKING LITTLE STEPS. INDIA MUST TAKE GIANT STEPS". HE NEGOTIATED THE SATELLITE INSTRUCTIONAL TELEVISION EXPERIMENT (SITE) WITH NASA AND SITE WAS A GIANT STEP FOR INDIA. INSAT-1 IS ANOTHER, ALBEIT VERY EXPENSIVE, GIANT STEP.

16. THE US COMPANIES HAVE BOTH THE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE NECESSARY FOR BUILDING INSAT-1 WHICH, WITH THE ADDITION OF TWO REMOTE SENSING DEVICES, IS A VERY SOPHISTICATED COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE. THE EMBASSY EXPECTS THIS PROCUREMENT TO BE AWARDED ON THE BASIS OF THE MERIT OF THE TECHNICAL PROPOSAL AND COST AND US COMPANIES HAVE THE BEST OPPORTUNITY FOR BEING AWARDED THIS PROCUREMENT.

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